

COURSE SPECIFICATION
DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department:	Communications, Arts and Social Sciences
Programme:	Film Studies
FHEQ Level:	6
Course Title:	Documentary Theory and Production
Course Code:	FLM 6220
Course Leader:	John Chua
Student Engagement Hours:	120
Lectures:	22.5
Seminar / Tutorials:	22.5
Independent / Guided Learning:	75
Semester:	Fall, Spring or Summer
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

This course introduces students to documentary film theory and gives students hand-on experience in producing their own short documentary. Students will examine some of the major works of the genre and explore how documentaries, like other types of “factual” texts, can present evidence, argue persuasively, shape public opinions, as well as entertain. We will also analyze many theoretical debates posed by the genre, including the blurring of fiction and nonfiction, the shifting definition of “documentary” through the last century and the problematic assumption of objectivity. Students therefore have the opportunity to try the different ‘parts’ of documentary film-making, including researching and developing topics for a documentary production, writing a treatment or proposal for the film, shooting and interviewing in the field, as well as crafting a story during the post-production and editing process.

Prerequisites:

ADM 5200 or submission on video or DVD of a video/film made by the applicant. Can be in any genre, but must demonstrate the ability to use a video camera and basic skills in sound recording and editing.

Aims and Objectives:

This course aims to expose students to the theories and practices of documentary film. It poses questions about how to analyse documentary films and what are the genre's forms, grammar and purpose. It also exposes students to contemporary debates and theories about documentary films. Students will put theory into practice by creating short documentary films. Successful students at the end of the course will have:

- Detailed knowledge and understanding of documentary theories and practices.
- Further developed the critical thinking and imaginative abilities needed to undertake the entire process required in documentary filmmaking.
- Developed an understanding on how to analyse successful examples of documentary films, taking into account the genre's form, grammar and purpose.
- Further developed the transferable skills, knowledge and ability to create a successful proposal and to complete a documentary project.

Programme Outcomes:

6A(i); 6B(i); 6C(i); 6D(ii)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Develop a systematic understanding of the genre's evolution, as well as its aesthetical traditions, forms, current characteristics and possible future developments.
- Develop a systematic understanding and application of the key production processes and professional practices in documentary production and apply this knowledge in the creation a short documentary film.

- Demonstrate the ability to gather, organise and deploy complex and abstract ideas and information to produce cogent arguments in a written proposal and a narrative within an original documentary film.
- Demonstrate personal responsibility and professional codes of conduct in working, learning and development, and in professional and interpersonal communication.

Indicative Content:

Key definitions of documentary
Key debates and theories about the documentary genre
Evolution of the documentary genre
Selecting a documentary subject
Writing a short proposal about the documentary project
Producing a documentary film
Manage cinematography, sound design & operation
Directing a documentary
Editing a documentary

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board.

Teaching Methodology:

Course meetings will consist of interactive lectures, class discussions, presentation of audiovisual materials, and one-on-one tutorials. Student work is assessed through a variety of ways using both formative and summative approaches. Feedback is intended to help improve student approach to learning and achieve better results.

Bibliography:

Indicative Text(s):

Chanan, M. *Politics of Documentary*. London: BFI Publishing, 2008. Print.
De Jong, Knutsen and Rothwell. *Creative Documentary Production and Practice*. Harlow: Longman, 2011. Print.
Fox, B. *Documentary Media: History, Theory, Practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2009. Print.
Kochberg, S. *Introduction to Documentary Production: A Guide for Media Students*. New York: Columbia U.P., 2002. Print.

Journals

